

Kentucky Teacher™

MARCH 2003

Board hears strategies for making schools better

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

The Kentucky Board of Education used its February meeting to examine reports and listen to recommendations for making the school experience better for all Kentucky students.

Board members heard independent evaluations of primary programs in high- and low- performing Kentucky schools and of extended school services (ESS) at high-performing schools. Kentucky Department of Education staff also reported on preliminary work to refocus secondary schools and review efforts to improve services at the Kentucky School for the Deaf and the Kentucky School for the Blind.

Representatives from nearly 20 Kentucky high schools are looking at what can be done to make high school a more powerful educational experience for students. Spurred by the lack of strong academic gains in high schools throughout the state, the board has charged this group to help secondary schools find ways to increase rigorous and challenging instruction that adequately prepares students for postsecondary education and the work force.

The board reiterated the importance of using the individual graduation plan at both the middle and high school levels for academic and instructional planning as well as career and technical planning. Their concerns list also included these items:

- ensuring that high schools adhere to the Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools
- ensuring that classes with labels such as Advanced Placement, honors classes and Algebra II actually provide rigorous curriculum
- providing best practices from successful high schools to schools and districts

- increasing parent involvement and mentor programs
- providing service learning opportunities for students

Board Chair Helen Mountjoy noted that a study of Kentucky high schools was done in 1992. "That report went on the shelf in many places," she said. "We must guarantee that this doesn't happen again."

The report from a two-year study of primary classrooms emphasizes the success Kentucky students are making in schools that provide developmentally appropriate instruction (hands-on learning, active engagement) in primary classrooms. Findings from the study, conducted by the University of Kentucky during the 2000-01 and 2001-02 school years, show a clear link between such practices and stu-

dent academic performance. The study found successful primary programs have strong leadership from the principal, provide quality, focused professional development for teachers, focus on continuous student progress and involve families in meaningful activities to support student learning.

A two-year study of ESS by the Appalachian Educational Laboratory looked at practices that are working to help struggling students achieve in high-performing schools. Best practices from successful ESS programs will be compiled as a resource tool for the staffs of all schools and districts.

In recent months, the Kentucky School for the Blind and the Kentucky School for the Deaf have begun improving educational services for students on their campuses and for those students in school districts who receive services from these

schools. The primary focus has been on the instructional and residential needs of students.

To advise the department and state board on all aspects of instruction and to improve communications with parents, the department is organizing 18 stakeholder groups. These groups are now being formed to make recommendations on implementing statewide educational services for students who are deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired.

In other business, the state board:

- gave final approval to a proposed regulation that provides guidance to districts in the area of attendance reporting. The regulation would require districts to include the amount of instructional time students receive on instructional days; clarifies attendance reporting for students taking virtual high school classes and those receiving home/hospital services or classes in alternative settings ordered by courts; and removes the expulsion and ethnic codes from the regulation. A public hearing on this proposed regulation is scheduled for 10 a.m. on March 24 in Frankfort. For information about participating in public hearings on proposed regulations, go to www.kentuckyschools.org and enter "public hearings" in the Keyword/Search Box in the upper right-hand corner of the page.

- continued discussing what entity will be held accountable for the academic performance of students who are placed in an A3-A6 school by the school or district or by an outside agency.

- heard a report from the Division of Educator Recruitment and Retention about its future-teacher identification efforts.



Photo by Rick McComb

100 Days, 100 Ways

Brandon Lee counts out 100 pieces of cereal as his teacher, Kentucky Teacher of the Year Patrice McCrary, evaluates his counting skills. The activity is one of many ways Kentucky teachers plan instruction around celebrations of the 100th day of school. Brandon is a primary student at Cumberland Trace Elementary in Warren County.

Commissioner's Comments



By Gene Wilhoit
Commissioner of Education

Kentucky proposes strategies for meeting NCLB assessment/accountability requirements

Change is nothing new to educators in Kentucky. Just think of the shifts in public education policies and practices during the past 13 years.

About the time all the changes seemed to come together and we felt more comfortable with our capacity to meet the expectations of the leaders and citizens of the Commonwealth, along came the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. I've heard concerns from teachers and administrators throughout the state about how Kentucky will comply with the federal law, especially the assessment and accountability components. If changes must be made, Kentucky educators want changes that support the progress we've made.

Kentucky's proposal for complying with NCLB demonstrates how Kentucky can meet – and in some cases exceed – the federal requirements while maintaining the philosophy, continuity and integrity of our nationally recognized system. When the U.S. Department of Education asked us to evaluate Kentucky's status in 31 NCLB assessment/accountability areas, we were able to report that the state already had policies for meeting or exceeding 27 of those components. We reported proposals for complying with the other four:

- **Annual State Report Card** – Kentucky will add high school graduation rates and certain data about teacher qualifications to the information already collected and published in the Annual Kentucky Performance Report.

- **Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)** – This requirement speaks specifically to equity by declaring any school or district as “not meeting AYP” if any of its student subgroups score below their individual progress goals. (NCLB requires data reporting by subgroups identified by economic status, race/ethnicity, disability and limited English proficiency. Kentucky exceeds the requirement by also including data by gender.) In line with Kentucky's Senate Bill 168, passed by the General Assembly in 2002, Kentucky proposes to classify as “not meeting federal AYP” any school in which a subgroup does not score at or above the subgroup's unique assistance point. However, we propose “safe harbor” if the group (of 10 students or more) has demonstrated progress from the previous year. Kentucky proposes to recognize progress in this important area.

- **District Accountability for Progress of Student Subgroups** – Senate Bill 168 makes schools and districts responsible for setting targets for reducing gaps in performance between subgroups and majority populations. To meet NCLB requirements, Kentucky proposes to develop a district accountability system that parallels the school accountability system and holds districts as accountable as schools for the progress of these specific subgroups.

It also would further specify the authority of districts to oversee the improvement of habitually low-performing schools (those beyond two cycles of not meeting improvement goals).

- **High School Graduation Rates in Accountability** – Ken-

tucky has included dropout rates in calculations that determine a high school's status in the state accountability system. To comply with NCLB, we would add high school graduation rates to our reporting system.

The most prevalent NCLB-related concerns I've heard are about the federal requirement for

annual testing in mathematics and reading for students in grades 3-8. Using a combination of CTBS norm-referenced tests and Kentucky Core Content Tests, Kentucky already assesses mathematics and reading skills at the end of primary through grade 8, but our system doesn't test both content areas in every one of those grades. In November, after the federal government denied Kentucky's request to waive the every-year requirement, the Kentucky Board of Education adopted a plan to administer augmented norm-referenced tests in reading and mathematics for all students from the end of primary through 8th grade. These tests will incorporate two teacher-developed,

field-tested open-response questions that cover Kentucky core content not addressed in the CTBS norm-referenced tests.

Although this change would add about 90 minutes to the testing time for students in grades 4, 5, 7 and 8, there would be a benefit that teachers have asked us to address: a longitudinal measurement of progress in these content areas.

Kentucky – perhaps more than any other state – is prepared to meet the new federal mandates without sacrificing what we have already achieved. The federal and state goals related to assessment and accountability are the same: proficiency for every student. Only our approaches differ, and U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige has assured us that his agency will work with us on this most fundamental aspect of NCLB.

NCLB representatives will be meeting with us between now and June to review our proposal. While I cannot say that representatives of the federal government will accept all aspects of Kentucky's proposal, I am confident that they will be impressed with what Kentucky is already doing to meet the needs of every child.

To comment to the commissioner on this or any topic, send e-mail to gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us or phone (502) 564-3141.

Kentucky's proposal for complying with the assessment/accountability component of NCLB is available online. Go to the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site (www.kentuckyschools.org) and enter #NCLB in the keyword/search box.



Teaching With the Brain in Mind

By Eric Jensen

Paperback, 133 pages; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, April 1998; ISBN 0871202999

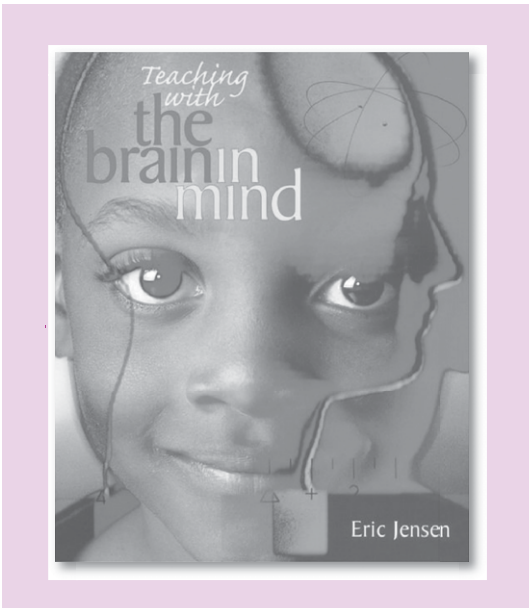
Teachers are usually taught about the human brain from a psychological standpoint. This book contends that teachers need to know more about the neurology of the brain so they can get students to learn, remember what they learn and be able to use what they learn in the future.

We think students forget most of what we teach them, but Jensen contends that we use inappropriate approaches when we ask them to recall information. Also, Jensen says that emotions must be tied to learning and that we must move away from thinking that emotions are irrational or have nothing to do with the way we think. Experiences generate emotions, which generate responses that influence a student's motivation. When we ask students to explain their goals and why these are their goals, the "why" is the emotional part – and the part that will help the teacher know if the lesson has reached the students. If a student has no emotional stake in a lesson, he or she will not remember it.

Jensen suggests several strategies for teachers: role modeling your love of learning; celebrating (not rewarding; that's a whole other chapter) to acknowledge achievement; setting up a controversy involving a debate, dialogue or argument to get students invested and expressing their opinions; establishing physical rituals that students can connect with what they're learning; and journaling that includes emotion in daily work and helps trigger memory.

This book contains a lot of useful information about how we learn. Some educators think it might be too technical. Nonsense! Teachers are smart people, and we need to tax ourselves every now and then!

*Review submitted by Linda Satterlee-McFadin
Teacher, Western Middle School (Jefferson County)*



Hope Fulfilled for At-Risk and Violent Youth: K-12 Programs That Work

By Robert D. Barr and William H. Parrett

Hardcover, 306 pages; Allyn and Bacon; second edition, September 2000; ISBN 0205308864

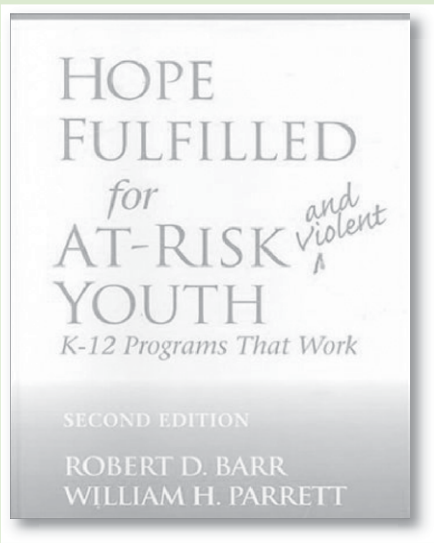
This book is a gold mine of much-needed, effective and necessary information on teaching at-risk students in our schools. It is a wonderful, inspiring book by an amazing author. I had the privilege of listening to Robert Barr speak at a graduate course I took last summer. The messages from this book: educators are the only hope many of these children have, all students can learn, and teaching reading remains important, no matter how old the student. By believing in these children, we can guarantee that even the severely at-risk will have promised success.

This book offers:

- Reasons why we should be concerned about at-risk youth
- Answers to why the needs of at-risk youth have not been addressed
- Examples of how school systems fail at-risk youth
- A comprehensive review of evidence regarding effective programs
- A potpourri of programs that work from early childhood all the way through high school
- Strategies for creating the will to educate all students

The messages in this book are important for educators and crucial to the understanding of all children. I recommend the book to teachers, administrators and school personnel at all levels.

*Review submitted by Tracy Deaton
Primary Teacher, Bush Elementary (Laurel County)*



In Lincoln County, professional development comes to the teachers – from other teachers

By Joy Barr
Kentucky Department of Education

Schools in Lincoln County have implemented a new program to help classroom teachers improve their teaching.

After analyzing local results from statewide testing, district officials determined that an on-site resource person at each school would be an asset to teachers. Consequently, the district named an academic performance specialist to work in each of the district's schools.

The staff at each school decides the subject areas in which students need the most improvement, based on test results. The specialists then work with teachers to develop strategies to improve those areas of need.

"It is very much a partnership program," said Susan Johnson, an academic performance specialist working as a resource teacher at Stanford Elementary.

The eight academic performance specialists are responsible for helping teachers develop instructional strategies that address a variety of learning styles. Because teachers now differentiate their instruction, students who may not learn as easily with one method may learn quickly through another method.

"We saw there were areas in our schools that needed improvement," said Thelma Blair, central office instructional supervisor. "Each school is different and has different needs. One school may excel in one area and have a deficiency in another. It is an effort to align curriculum and improve consistency."

Hailey Springate-Ralston, the academic performance specialist at Lincoln County High, wants to be thought of as a partner, not an administrator. "We work alongside teachers to offer assistance," Springate-Ralston said. "This program has been very well received, and teachers are supportive of the effort."

Bruce Smith, the district's federal programs coordinator, oversees the program and determines the training needs for the specialists. "As many resources as possible are going toward reaching our goal of proficiency, and the academic performance specialist is a good way to implement the district's consolidated plan," he said.

The specialists were chosen based on their success as classroom teachers and their leadership skills. A combination of federal and local funds supports the program.

"Previously, teachers were sent out of their classrooms for training, but the teacher-partner approach enables us to train them onsite. It's ongoing, embedded professional development," said Nancy Wilcher, the district's elementary supervisor.

The specialists meet monthly as a team to share ideas. The goal is to have the specialists increase their knowledge so they can bring that back to all teachers in the district. Blair likes the consistency it brings to the district.

"For schools to reach proficiency, it helps to share ideas," she said.

To contact the people quoted in this story, send e-mail through the KETS global e-mail list. For details about the teacher-partner program, contact Thelma Blair at the Lincoln County district office at (606) 365-2124 or tblair@lincoln.k12.ky.us.

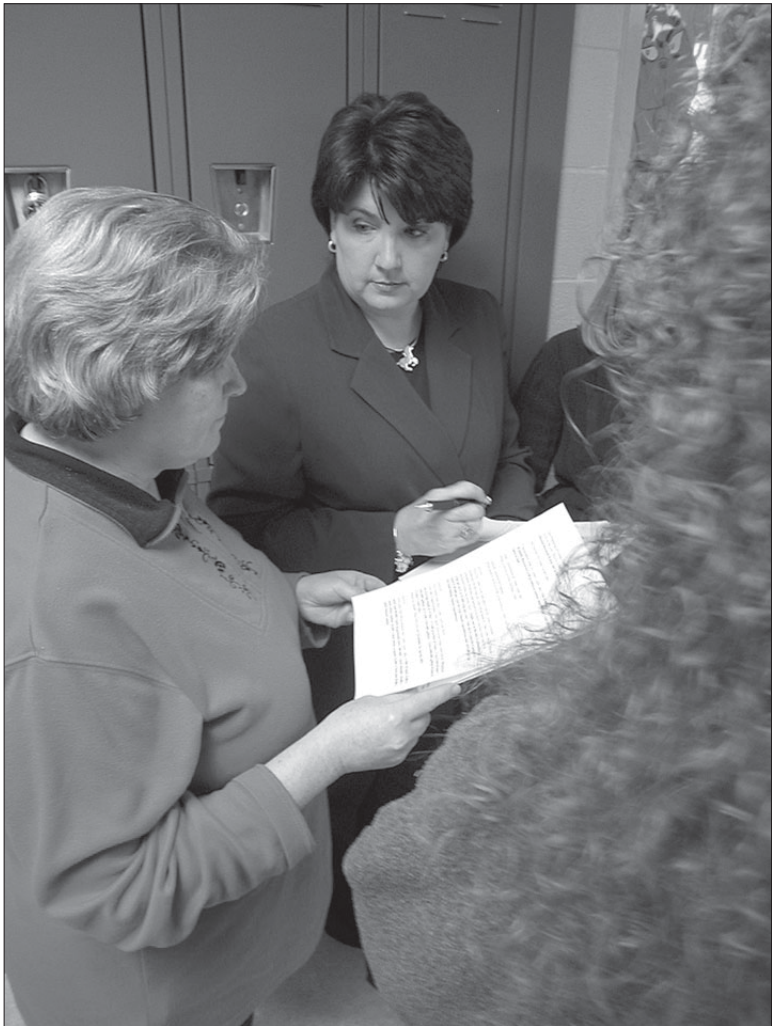



Photo by Rick McComb

Academic performance specialist Darlene Combs (in dark jacket) works with 7th-grade science teacher Barbara Terry and other Lincoln County Middle School teachers to develop a standards-based unit of study based on Cedar Creek Lake, a new recreational project in the county. In a districtwide program, eight academic performance specialists help teachers develop instructional strategies that address their students' varied learning styles.



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Starting with newborns!

Christian County educators, agencies and parents work together to prevent achievement gaps

By Bev Thomson
Christian County Adult Education Coordinator

The “achievement gap” between the test scores of impoverished children and minorities and children from more affluent homes has been making headlines in the past year or two, but the gap itself is not a recent development. It has been of great concern to adult education and literacy programs since the late 1980s, when family literacy programs began in Kentucky. We recognized back then that children whose parents were high school dropouts were twice as likely to do poorly in school and drop out. When a parent is also unemployed, the likelihood of a student dropping out increases by five.

The Kentucky Education Reform Act recognized this gap when it initiated the at-risk preschool program, which includes a parent involvement component.

In Christian County, we aim to prevent those gaps before they can get started. Our effort includes two projects: Project Born-to-Read, initiated in the fall of 1996, and BOOKENDS Family Reading Club, a direct initiative with our public preschool programs.

Also, the Christian County school district takes advantage of the family literacy funding offered through the Kentucky Department of Adult Education and Literacy and through the Kentucky Department of Education’s Even Start initiative.

These efforts are paying off in measurable ways. Our school district’s kindergarten teachers and other officials were concerned when Early Prevention to School Failure (EPSF) screenings from 1991 to 1995 indicated that only 29 percent to 37 percent of our children were entering first-year primary with age-appropriate reading readiness skills.

In 1996, the local Christian County Literacy Council, made up of community volunteers and educators, initiated Project Born-to-Read to encourage parents to read to their children starting at birth, in hopes of sending children to school better prepared to become good readers. Our long-range goal was to decrease the dropout rate, realizing that the number one reason students drop out is because they fall too far behind their peers educationally.

This project has three major partners: Christian County Literacy Council, Christian County Extension Homemakers (providing the books for “newborn packets”) and Jennie Stuart Medical Center (providing “Born-to-Read” bibs and distributing the packets to the families of newborns). The Christian County Health Department and Pediatric Associates give additional information packets to families at well-child check-ups when the babies are 6 months and 1 year of age. With these front-line medical professionals encouraging families to read at home, we think our children have a better chance of success when they start school.

In the fall of 1999, the literacy council and the school district’s adult education and family literacy educators teamed up with the public preschool teachers to develop and implement the BOOKENDS Family Reading Club. The intent was to encourage more reading in the homes of our preschoolers. At each monthly meeting, parents and preschoolers read a book promoting good character, take part in activities related to the book’s theme and related preschool concepts, enjoy refreshments and then take the book home with them.

BOOKENDS became (and remains) the major parent involvement component for our preschool. We had around 350 children enrolled in preschool in 1999-2000, and we averaged more than 100 families a month participating in the BOOKENDS Family Reading Club monthly meetings.

Results? When these children entered primary in the fall of 2000, the percentage of children scoring at the “expected age level” in receptive language on the EPSF screening rose to 60 percent. (From the years 1991 through 1999, this percentage had ranged between 29 percent and 40 percent.) We think that the two early-intervention projects had a great deal to do with this increase.

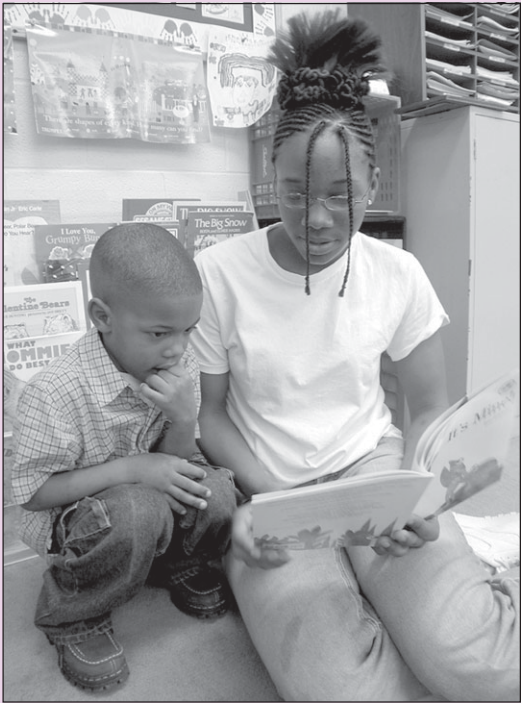
BOOKENDS continued in the 2000-2001 school year. In the fall of 2001, the EPSF indicated 58 percent entering school at the expected age level in receptive language. It will be interesting to follow these two groups of children to see if their scores on the Kentucky Core Content Tests continue to show an improvement over those of previous groups.

The secret to this success is the teamwork involved between those working in early childhood (our preschool teachers) and those working with the undereducated adults (our family literacy and adult education teachers). It also is due to the dedi-

cation of the head preschool teacher, Ann Smith, working with family literacy teacher Sandy Cunningham, to develop the BOOKENDS curriculum and train the preschool teachers to use it.

For more information about BOOKENDS or Project Born-to-Read, contact Bev Thomson at bthomson@christian.k12.ky.us.

Every county in Kentucky now has a family literacy program funded through the Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy. For information about your county, visit adulthood.state.ky.us on the Web.



Tameica Kendrick reads to her son De’Vorian during a BOOKENDS Family Reading Club session for parents and preschool children. This parent involvement activity is one of several “closing the achievement gap” programs posting measurable results in Christian County schools.

Stress? What stress!?! Schools

Sweaty palms. Rapid, shallow breaths. Headaches. Stomachaches. Throwing up.

Those could be symptoms of a virus going around – or symptoms of a big test coming soon. Teachers know that high-stakes tests can bring on high-level anxiety. Little wonder, then, that the annual spring rite called the Kentucky Core Content Tests can be stressful to students – and teachers and administrators, for that matter.

Educators want students to take testing seriously – to a point. “Believe it or not, some kids actually make themselves sick over this test,” Farley Elementary 4th-grade teacher Kim Carper told a newspaper reporter prior to last spring’s testing. “That’s not what we want at all.”

What teachers want is for students to feel relaxed and confident so they can think straight and apply what they know to solve problems posed by the test. Here’s how a few Kentucky schools eased “test stress” and motivated students to do their best on state tests last spring.

Henry County

New Castle Elementary

As in all schools, skill building and test preparation activities took place throughout the year. In addition, reports Assistant Superintendent Cricket McClure, a Disney-themed “Two Weeks of Magic” motivated students during the two weeks prior to testing. Among the activities: Disney music over the school’s public address system, a motivational speaker (the principal dressed as a wizard), a pep rally and a parade. Classes developed and performed encouraging cheers, and they decorated classroom doors with motivational themes. Fifth-graders attended sessions on test-taking strategies.

Harlan County

Cumberland High School

Teacher Anna Carruba developed three different activities that reinforced her 7th-graders’ knowledge and understanding of content vocabulary they needed to know to perform well on the tests. In one activity, a version of the game “Concentration,” one set of cards contained terms; another set provided definitions. Students drew cards from each set and conferred with other students until they found matched terms with definitions. Then the students reported their term-definition matches to the class.

Franklin County

Bondurant Middle School

Students in the gifted/talented class produced motivational videos for schoolwide broadcast each morning of the week before testing and during testing week. The three- to four-minute videos used humor to communicate important messages.

Hardin County

Central Hardin High

Students could earn “Good Faith Effort” awards during the testing period, based on a rubric that included attendance, behavior, attitude, the use of effective test-taking processes and legibility of responses. The rewards ranged from dropping the lowest in-class test score made in the past nine weeks, getting extra credit on one assignment, or excusing one tardy of two minutes of less. Seniors and juniors who scored proficient or distinguished in all four tested content areas (mathematics, science, social studies and arts/humanities) got preferential parking at the school (seniors for the rest of the school year, juniors for their entire senior year). “This seemed to be a huge incentive,” said Principal Dale Campbell. “Driving is a big thing for juniors.”

G.C. Burkhead Elementary

The school awarded trophies to students who scored proficient or above. Presentations took place at a special evening event for students and parents. “We also use the event to share test data with parents, so we get a great turnout,” says Principal Liz Tabb. “The parents are very proud of their children’s accomplishments.” Tabb reports that students want to earn the trophies. The number of winners jumped from 45 in spring 2000 to 185 in spring 2001.

Pulaski

Pulaski Elementary

In addition to daily motivational announcements, the school rewarded students who completed activities on a daily checklist:

- Did I read all the parts?
- Did I answer all parts of the question?
- Did I follow the steps my teacher taught?
- Did I recheck my answers?
- Did I do my best?

The school also provided pencils imprinted with the testing logo. The family resource center gave each student a “first-aid kit” (see below). Every student who had perfect attendance during the testing period was eligible to attend a “movie on the ceiling” event in the gym. Principal Sharon Reece calls the event “our most motivating strategy yet” and plans to repeat it again this spring.

Pulaski Elementary Testing First-Aid Kit

- 1 pack Smarties candies to boost your test-taking brain power
- 1 sticker to help you stick with the test
- 1 eraser to use when you check your work
- 1 peppermint to write down cool answers
- 1 pencil grip to get a grip on the test

For best results, combine with a good night of restful sleep, nutritious breakfast and positive attitudes during test time. Possible side effects are improved skills and good grades.

Southern Elementary

The school’s faculty, staff and PTA contracted with a local theater to show an educationally appropriate and fun movie for students who earned sufficient points during the testing weeks. Students earned points

Schools and districts focus on keeping students cool, calm, collected and motivated at state test-taking time

Madison County

based on a teacher-developed rubric that included simple but important items dealing with students trying their best, attending every day and following school rules. “An immediate reward – the movie – was the key to the success of our students,” reports Principal Keith Patrick. “Our school experienced substantial improvement in test scores, and the students displayed a real interest in their personal test success.”

Woodstock Elementary

The school celebrated each day in the week before testing with a different letter in the acronym D.E.A.R.S. (Discussion, Eating, Attendance, Resting and Spirit). On Monday a guest speaker encouraged the students. Tuesday’s focus was on nutrition, and the school served healthful snacks. Wednesday brought recognition for all those with perfect attendance that day. On Thursday, to emphasize the importance of getting adequate sleep during the testing period, students wore pajamas to class. Friday brought a spirited pep rally. Throughout the week, teachers planned all instruction around the specific subjects in which their students would be tested.

Pulaski County High

Students who had already exhibited leadership capabilities and strength in test taking became members of the school’s Student Support Team for Testing. These students visited every homeroom to deliver information about testing and motivate their fellow students to do their best. Each day of CATS Spirit Week had a different motivational/test preparation theme. English teacher Jackie Rogers reports that students enjoyed hearing test-taking tips from their peers. Making the presentations made members of the Student Support Team for Testing even better prepared to do well on their own tests.

McCracken County

Farley Elementary

Teacher Kim Carper designed a T-shirt for Farley students who attended all testing sessions, completed all portions of the test and participated with a good attitude. The T-shirt proclaims, “I attended, I worked, I achieved.” At an assembly on the Friday before testing, Carper introduced the shirts and other teachers explained the importance of attendance, proper nutrition and getting enough sleep. After testing, the school sponsored a special games-and-prizes event open only to students who had earned a shirt.

Hendron-Lone Oak Elementary

Special education resource teacher Rebecca Pope taught her students yoga and relaxation techniques to help them deal with test anxiety. “Special-needs students tend to pick up other people’s anxiety and stress levels,” she said. “We’re trying to teach them how the body reacts to stress and how to control that. We want to teach them techniques to stay calm without people around them even realizing they’re using stress control techniques.” This year, the school will also offer relaxation classes for teachers.

Reidland Middle and High

A kick-off assembly on Monday of the first testing week featured a motivational speaker who surprised students by shedding his business attire to reveal a red-and-blue superhero costume. He explained the importance of education and the keys to being “superheroes” who do their best. The high school principal, Glen Ringstaff, said the schools delayed the start of testing until Tuesday because students generally perform better during the middle three days of the week and because school absenteeism is usually higher on Mondays and Fridays. Other test motivators included breakfast at the school and snacks and bottled water during breaks.

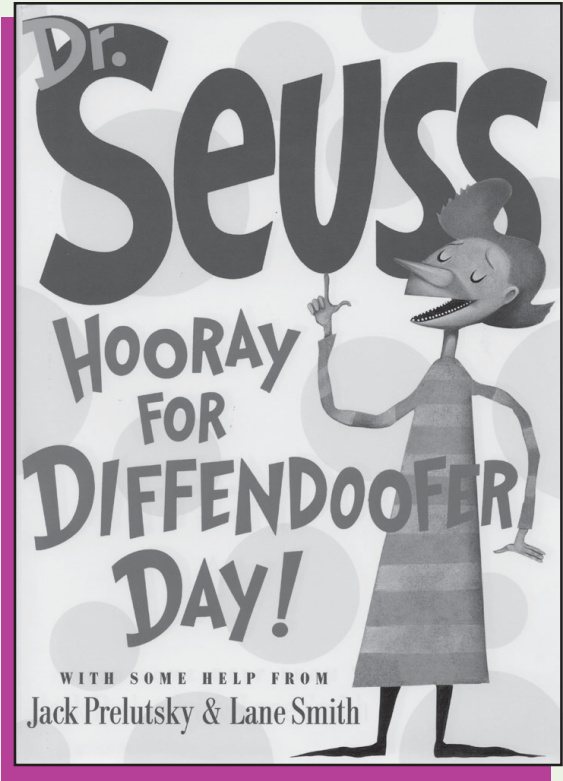
What about the teachers?

By Ava Taylor
Kentucky Department of Education

Testing time can be stressful for teachers, too. But there is a book that can help. “Hooray for Diffendoofer Day” is a humorous story about a school and the state achievement test students must pass or be sent to dreary Flobbertown School. At Diffendoofer School, the teachers are all different and teach many skills, but Miss Bonkers is “different-er than the rest.” The principal is worried about the achievement of Diffendoofer’s students, especially the students in Miss Bonkers’ class. But Miss Bonkers knows her students can pass the test and many other tests because she has taught the students to *think*.

This book would be excellent to share with staff and students as spring approaches and everyone is preparing for the Kentucky Core Content Tests. It takes a Dr. Seuss look at student learning, curriculum, achievement, school staff and school climate. Even though the book is presented in a witty manner, it emphasizes the importance of preparing, teaching the content and working together schoolwide.

“Hooray for Diffendoofer Day” by Dr. Seuss with some help from Jack Prelutsky and Lane Smith; hardcover, 36 pages; Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1998; ISBN 0679890084



A Win-Win Situation

Japanese cultural opportunity benefits teachers and students

By Joy Barr
Kentucky Department of Education

It was the beginning of the 2002-03 school year, and 5th-grade teacher Jason Kyle had just returned from a fully funded, three-week trip to Japan as a recipient of a Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program professional development opportunity.

Kyle brought back many educational experiences and opportunities to share with his students at McKinney Elementary in rural Lincoln County. But he brought back more than that! What better way to bring the rich culture of Japan to the McKinney students, he thought, than to bring a Japanese teacher to the school?

Kyle had learned about an exchange program through the Government of Japan and was eager to take advantage of it for his students and the community. "Our school is somewhat isolated, and many of the families never get to meet a person from a different culture. It was a great opportunity," he said.

And so came Aiko Yotsuhashi, a 29-year-old teacher (students called her Miss Aiko). She stayed at McKinney for approximately three months, teaching students about Japanese culture and language.

McKinney's principal, Donnie Leigh, also saw the potential for learning about the world beyond Lincoln County. "It is important for students to know that there are other cultures outside Kentucky and that there are many differences but also many similarities," he said. "When

Miss Aiko arrived, there were several instances of apprehension among the students and staff. Since she was so kind to embrace our small school



Aiko Yotsuhashi shows McKinney Elementary student Kayla Roberts how to write the Japanese character that means "friend." The Lincoln County school hosted "Miss Aiko" for three months. Teacher Jason Kyle recommended inviting a teacher from Japan to work with local students and the community after he returned from a Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program professional development experience in that country.

community, we embraced her as a part of us."

Miss Aiko took the initiative to become a part of the school environment and to go into every classroom weekly and share her culture and language with students in the school. She provided hands-on learning opportunities related to Japanese food, games, history, language, crafts, images, stories and music.

"Miss Aiko not only brought the Japanese culture home to us, but she was really a fine person of character with a real enthusiasm for children and an excellent teacher," Leigh said. He noted that the students learned there are many more similarities than there are differences between U.S. and Japanese cultures.

Leigh said the day Miss Aiko left was an emotional one for the students. "They felt the anxieties of saying goodbye to someone who had provided fun teaching and learning opportunities for them," he said, "but they also now know that they personally have a connection to the rest of the world. Students now seem to view the world as just a little bit smaller."

Fifth-grader Shaina Martin said Miss Aiko "was lots of fun. I especially liked learning about the Japanese people. I also liked learning to use chopsticks and making kimono dolls."

Another 5th-grader, Hartford Jenkins, said she liked Miss Aiko's stories about the samurai and sumo wrestling. "I also liked calligraphy and origami," she said. "We learned to write our name and count to 10 in Japanese."

Miss Aiko stayed with Kyle's family during her stay. "To have someone from not only another country but another culture come to my home as a guest and friend has been a life-changing experience," Kyle said.

Miss Aiko returned to Japan and her work as a monitor at a private English school, where she instructs teachers on classroom organization and management.

For more information about McKinney's Japanese cultural exchange experience, contact Jason Kyle at (606) 346-4741 or send e-mail to jkyle@lincoln.k12.ky.us.

For details about Fulbright Memorial Fund teacher exchange opportunities, visit www.glocomnet.or.jp/fmf/ on the Web.

Tidbits About Classrooms in Japan

- School is compulsory for the first nine grades.
 - Each teacher has approximately 35 to 40 students.
 - Schools are typically multilevel because space is limited.
 - Lunches are free for all, and students eat in their classrooms.
 - Every student cleans an assigned area of the school daily.
 - Over half of the students attend after-school programs called "cram schools."
 - Elementary students are required to pass a test before entering high school.
 - Students are taught to respect elders at home and school.
 - The classroom is quiet, and the mood is serious.
 - Much emphasis is placed on computer technology.
 - Students have homework nightly and over summer and winter vacations.
- Source: Aiko Yotsuhashi

Calling Young Scientists!

Kentucky seeks top student science projects for Intel international competition

The first Kentucky Science and Engineering Fair (KY-SEF) invites middle and high school student scientists to compete for awards and, for high school finalists, an opportunity to compete in the prestigious Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (IISEF).

At KY-SEF, scheduled for April 4 and 5 at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, an estimated 400 students will compete in 15 categories: Behavioral and Social Sciences, Biochemistry, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth and Space Sciences, Engineering, Environmental Science, Gerontology, Mathematics, Medicine and Health, Microbiology, Physics, Zoology and Team Projects.

Awards will include university and private scholarships plus special awards presented by KY-SEF sponsor corporations and organizations. High school finalists will represent Kentucky at IISEF, the “world’s largest pre-college celebration of science,” competing with more than 1,200 students from around the world for \$3 million in scholarships, tuition grants, scientific equipment and scientific trips. IISEF is planned for May 11-17 in Cleveland.

Karen Kidwell Malphrus, a science consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education, says KY-SEF represents a milestone for the science and technical education community in Kentucky. “KY-SEF’s mission is to expand educational opportunities for all middle school and high school students,” she said. “This new event will enhance the visibility and importance of science and engineering in Kentucky by providing annual statewide competitions that support, encourage and recognize student excellence in science and engineering research.”

She added that conducting projects for KY-SEF can advance science skills recommended in the National Science Education Standards and provide opportunities to integrate the scientific inquiry process with Kentucky’s Learning Goals.

For more information about KY-SEF, contact one of the co-directors: Robert Creek at (859) 622-1539 (robert.creek@eku.edu) or Kim Alexander at (859) 622-2902 (kimberly.alexander@eku.edu).

For elementary, middle and high school units that encourage students to design and conduct authentic science projects, go to the Department of Education’s Web site (www.kentuckyschools.org). Click on “Instructional Resources,” then “Middle School” or “High School,” then “Science,” then “Standards-based Units.” For individual assistance, contact Karen Kidwell Malphrus at (502) 564-2106 or kkidwell@kde.state.ky.us.

For international competition information, guidelines and regulations, visit IISEF’s Web site at www.sciserv.org/isef/.



Photo by Rick McComb

Dramatic Readings

Students Alma Rivera (left) and Nelida Salazar team up to act out the story they’re reading in Beverly Baker’s music and drama class at Harrison Elementary School in Fayette County.

Send entries by March 31 for film-video festival

The Corbin Independent Film and Video Festival is accepting entries for this year’s competition. Student work from high schools, middle schools and elementary schools must be submitted on VHS tape or DVD (with the exception of screenplay scripts) in these categories: Narrative/Short Story, Documentary, Music Video, Informational/Promotional, Abstract/Experimental/Animation, Commercial, News/Sports Feature, Screenplay.

Mail entries by March 31 to Mark Daniels, Corbin Independent Film and Video Festival, Corbin Board of Education, 108 Roy Kidd Ave., Corbin, KY 40701. Winners will be notified by April 11 and invited to awards ceremonies scheduled for April 28.

Visit www.corbinreachproject.org for more information.

Kentucky gets high marks for improving teacher quality

Kentucky recently received high grades in a national evaluation of state efforts to improve teacher quality and hold schools accountable to clear standards.

Education Week’s “Quality Counts,” the magazine’s annual analysis of state P-12 education programs, this year focused on teacher certification, working conditions, qualifications, recruitment and retention of P-12 teachers. Kentucky’s scorecard ranked the state high in two categories (see chart). Only two states – New York and Florida – ranked higher in the Standards and Accountability category than Kentucky. In the Improving Teacher Quality category, only South Carolina outranked Kentucky.

“Kentucky’s ‘report card’ is encouraging,” said Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit. “This is the second year in a row that Kentucky has received an “A” in Standards and Accountability, and that grade puts the state in a leadership position. Kentucky has long served as a model for other states as we developed and implemented high academic standards and school accountability.”

Wilhoit expressed disappointment with Kentucky’s low ranking in School Climate, a category that included school safety, parental involvement and charter schools. “The criteria do not recognize school-based decision making councils, and Kentucky’s councils provide school-level control of day-to-day activities and involve teachers and parents in the decision-making process,” Wilhoit said. “While researchers have expanded the categories used to determine School Climate grades, we believe the work of school councils deserves more credit.”

“Quality Counts 2003” also provided in-depth analysis of each states’ teaching force, providing data on certifications, length of experience, reported obstacles to high student achievement and support and incentives for new and veteran teachers.

“I am pleased to see Kentucky getting recognition for its commitment to quality teaching,” said Susan Leib, executive director of the state Education Professional Standards Board, which oversees P-12 teacher and administrator preparation and certification. “We are the only state that bars out-of-field teaching, and we’re one of only five states that provides information about teacher credentials on a Web site. Our requirements for new teachers are some of the most rigorous nationwide.”

Based in Bethesda, Maryland, Education Week chronicles P-12 education in the United States. The full “Quality Counts 2003” report is available online at www.edweek.org.

“Quality Counts 2003” Score Card		
	Kentucky’s Overall Grade	Rank Among States
Standards and Accountability	A	3rd
Improving Teacher Quality	B	2nd
School Climate	C -	31st
Resource Equity	C+	17th
Resource Adequacy	C+	27th



Happily Ever After
Wayne Williams reads to his children Cherakie and Danny during Family Circle Night. The monthly event is part of BOOKENDS, a reading readiness/gap prevention program for Christian County preschoolers and their families. For more information, see Page 5.

Calling all aspiring writers!

This year’s Kentucky Writer’s Workshop (March 28 and 29 in Pineville) will feature sessions for aspiring poets, novelists, essayists and short-story writers. On the agenda are three Kentucky writers:

- Silas House, award-winning author of two novels, “Clay’s Quilt” and “A Parchment of Leaves,” will lead writing exercises and disclose tips for getting published.
- George Ella Lyon, whose works include two collections of poems, 14 picture books, three novels for young readers and a novel for adult new readers, will offer insights to picture book writing and exercises for beginning authors who want to write for children.
- Leatha Kendrick, poet, essayist and former editor of “Wind” magazine, will explore mental approaches to writing fresh poetry.

The fee for this workshop is \$30 (\$35 on site). Event planners recommend preregistration. To request a registration form or additional information, contact Dean Henson at Pine Mountain State Resort Park, 1050 State Park Road, Pineville, KY 40977-0610; (606) 377-3066 or (800) 325-1712.

Lodging reservations must be made separately by March 14. The park offers a special package for this event. For details, visit www.pinemountainpark.com and click on “Special Events,” or phone the park at the numbers above.

Scholarships available to future counselors

To help schools and districts meet their needs for counseling services, the Kentucky Counseling Association offers scholarship assistance to college graduates who want to become junior counselors.

Interested persons can start this summer with tuition assistance and grants of up to \$100 for textbooks. Each of these participating colleges and universities will provide one tuition waiver: Eastern Kentucky, Lindsey Wilson, University of Louisville, Morehead State, Murray State, Western Kentucky and Xavier of Ohio.

The application deadline is April 15. For more information and an application, visit the Kentucky Counseling Association Web site at www.kyca.org (select “KCA Summer 2003 Scholarship Application”) or contact KCA Executive Director Bill Braden at (502) 223-5905.

Bulletin Board

By Joy Barr
Kentucky Department of Education

Register for Kentucky Folklife Festival 2003!

The Kentucky Historical Society and the Kentucky Arts Council invite teachers to register student groups for the 2003 Kentucky Folklife Festival, September 25-27 in downtown Frankfort. Through demonstrations, performances and hands-on activities, the event will showcase traditions in music, dance, crafts, foods and occupational traditions from diverse groups throughout the state. Group reservations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, and requests received before April 30 will receive priority.

For a registration form, leave a voice mail or e-mail message for Jennie Boyd at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4424, or jennie.boyd@mail.state.ky.us. Include your name and school address.

We the People summer institutes set

This year's "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution" summer institutes are scheduled by grade level:

- Elementary teachers – July 14
- Middle school teachers – July 15
- High school teachers – July 16

The sessions will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 4:30 p.m. at the Administrative Office of the Courts in Frankfort. The annual program, sponsored by the Kentucky Supreme Court and the Administrative Office of the Courts, is a national scholastic program for teaching students about the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. School teams may compete in annual mock congressional hearings.

Teachers may attend the institutes at no cost. For details, contact Rachel Bingham, Administrative Office of the Courts, at (800) 928-2350 or RachelB@mail.aoc.state.ky.us.

Workshop to show how to identify gifted students from low-income backgrounds

A two-day professional development session, "Identifying and Servicing Gifted Students from Poverty," is scheduled for June 5 and 6 in Madisonville. The key presenter will be career educator and author Paul Slocumb. Session topics will include behavior intervention, support systems, cognitive issues and techniques for working with parents. The cost for the session is \$200, which includes a copy of Slocumb's book, "Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty."

For more information, contact Carolyn Ferrell at the Badgett Regional Cooperative at (270) 821-4909 or send e-mail to cferrell@brcee.coop.k12.ky.us.

Murray State accepting nominations for Outstanding Teacher Award

Murray State University is accepting nominations for the eighth annual Kentucky Outstanding Teacher Award of \$1,000 to one full-time teacher at each level: primary/elementary, middle grades and high school.

A letter of nomination (maximum 750 words) must include one section on each of three criteria: demonstrated excellence in teaching, contributions to parental involvement in learning and commitment to school excellence. Include the nominator's name, title, address, phone number and relationship to the nominee (self-nominations accepted). Also include a letter of support from an administrator in the nominee's school district, if the nomination is by someone other than an administrator.

The deadline for nominations is April 14. Send as an e-mail attachment to george.patmor@coe.murraystate.edu or mail to Dean's Office/Education, Murray State University, 3101 Alexander Hall, Murray, KY 42071-3340. Refer questions to George Patmor at the same e-mail address or (270) 762-3832.

Aviation Museum sponsors essay/art contest

To mark the centennial of flight, the Aviation Museum of Kentucky invites Kentucky's K-12 students to write essays or use art to answer the question "How did the flight at Kitty Hawk shape the world?" Students will compete for \$50 savings bonds, and winning entries in each age group will be displayed at the Aviation Museum at Lexington's Blue Grass Airport for a year.

Participants may submit contest entries by May 1 to the Aviation Museum of Kentucky, P.O. Box 4118, Lexington, KY 40544.

For more information about contest rules and requirements, call Steve Parker, Aviation Museum executive director at (859) 231-1219 or e-mail sparker@aviationky.org.

National Teacher Appreciation Week

May 4-10, 2003

National Teacher Day

May 6, 2003

For activities celebrating teachers, check online at www.pta.org/programs/tchappwk.htm.

School groups invited to art exhibition

"Magic, Mystery and Materials: Selections from the Crow Collection of Asian Art" will be on exhibit April 6-Aug. 3 at the University of Kentucky Art Museum. The items on display will be made of glass, jade, ivory and other materials from nature.

Curriculum materials are available for educators. The exhibition is free to students and school groups by reservation. For details, contact Jane Boswell with the UK Art Museum at (859) 257-5717 or jvbosw00@uky.edu.

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Photo by Rick McComb

Brittany Andrews groups pictures of musical instruments into families in Beverly Baker's music class at Harrison Elementary in Fayette County.